

Ser. No. 10/706,718
Amdt. dated Sept. 21, 2004

Amendments to the Claims

Listing of Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A device for combining a pair of rakes, each rake having a handle connected to a rake head with tines, said device comprising:
 - a first sleeve adapted to be secured to a first rake handle;
 - a second sleeve pivotally connected to said first sleeve; and
 - a third sleeve adapted to be secured to a second rake handle;wherein said second sleeve is adapted to receive said third sleeve and wherein said second sleeve comprises means for permitting rotation of said third sleeve and said second rake handle within said second sleeve.
2. (Currently Amended) The device as recited in claim 1, wherein said second sleeve includes a guide pin mounted on an inside surface thereof, the guide pin adapted to be engageable with a channel in said third sleeve.
3. (Original) The device as recited in claim 1, wherein said third sleeve includes a semi-circular channel for receiving a guide pin extending from said second sleeve and allowing said third sleeve to rotate at least 180 degrees within said second sleeve.
4. (Original) The device as recited in claim 3, wherein said third sleeve includes an opening extending between said semi-circular channel and an edge of said sleeve for receiving said guide pin as said third sleeve is positioned within said second sleeve.

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Ser. No. 10/706,718
Amdt. dated Sept. 21, 2004

5. (Original) The device as recited in claim 3, further comprising a latch, said latch comprising:
- a base;
 - a guide pin extending perpendicular to said base surface; and
 - means for securing said latch to said second sleeve.
6. (Original) The device as recited in claim 5, wherein said second sleeve includes a boss and an opening therethrough for receiving said guide pin.
7. (Original) The device as recited in claim 6, wherein said latch may be positioned on said second sleeve such that said latch is secured to said second sleeve and said guide pin is inserted into said boss, through said opening, and into said channel when said third sleeve is inserted into said second sleeve.
8. (Original) The device as recited in claim 5, wherein said means for securing said latch to said second sleeve comprises a C-shaped portion perpendicular to said base.
9. (Original) The device as recited in claim 8 wherein said second sleeve comprises flanges for engaging said C-shaped portion to secure said latch to said second sleeve.
10. (Original) The device as recited in claim 9, wherein said C-shaped portion comprises a slot in an upper portion thereof for receiving a latch retaining screw.
11. (Original) The device as recited in claim 10, wherein said second sleeve comprises a hole for receiving said retaining screw.
12. (Original) The device as recited in claim 11, wherein said latch may be positioned on said second sleeve such that said C-shaped portion slidably engages said flanges and said guide pin is inserted into said boss.

Ser. No. 10/706,718
Amdt. dated Sept. 21, 2004

13. (Original) The device as recited in claim 12, further comprising a latch retaining screw positioned in said slot on said C-shaped portion and said hole for receiving said latch retaining screw on said second sleeve.
14. (Original) The device as recited in claim 13, wherein said latch may be moved from an unlocked to a locked position by sliding said latch in a direction towards said second sleeve so that said guide pin is inserted into said groove on said third sleeve.
15. (Original) The device as recited in claim 1 wherein said first sleeve comprises at least one tightening screw for securing said first sleeve to a handle of a rake.
16. (Original) The devices as recited in claim 1 wherein said third sleeve comprise at least one tightening screw for securing said third sleeve to a handle of a rake.
17. (Original) The device as recited in claim 1 wherein said third sleeve comprises a guide pin on an outer surface thereof and second sleeve comprises a T-shaped channel for receiving said guide pin for allowing said third sleeve to rotate at least 180 degrees within said second sleeve.
18. (Original) An apparatus for connecting a pair of rakes, said apparatus comprising:
a first cylindrical sleeve adapted to be secured to a first rake handle;
a second cylindrical sleeve pivotally connected to said first sleeve, said second sleeve having a guide pin on an inner surface thereof; and
a third cylindrical sleeve adapted to be secured to a second rake handle;
wherein said second sleeve is adapted to receive said third sleeve and wherein said third sleeve has a T-shaped channel adapted for receiving said guide pin and allowing said third sleeve to rotate at least 180 degrees within said second sleeve.
19. (Original) An apparatus for connecting a pair of rakes, said apparatus comprising:

Ser. No. 10/706,718
Amdt. dated Sept. 21, 2004

a first cylindrical sleeve adapted to be secured to a first rake handle;

a second cylindrical sleeve pivotally connected to said first sleeve, said second sleeve having a T-shaped channel therein; and

a third cylindrical sleeve adapted to be secured to a second rake handle, said third sleeve having at least one guide pin on an outer surface thereof;

wherein said second sleeve is adapted to receive said third sleeve and said T-shaped channel is adapted to receive said guide pin to allow said third sleeve to rotate at least 180 degrees within said second sleeve.

20. (Original) An apparatus for connecting a pair of rakes, said apparatus comprising:

a first cylindrical sleeve adapted to be secured to a first rake handle;

a second cylindrical sleeve pivotally connected to said first sleeve, said second sleeve comprising a substantially L-shaped latch receiving portion comprising a pair of flanges, a boss for receiving a guide pin, an opening extending through said boss into an interior of said second sleeve, and a hole for receiving a latch retaining screw;

a third cylindrical sleeve adapted to receive a second rake handle, said third sleeve having a semi-circular channel therein;

a latch, comprising a base, a guide pin extending perpendicular to said base, and a C-shaped portion extending perpendicular to said base and adapted to engage said pair of flanges, wherein said C-shaped portion has a slot in an upper portion thereof for receiving said latch retaining screw.

21. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for combining two rakes or the like, said apparatus comprising:

a first sleeve adapted to be secured to a first longitudinally-extending rake handle; and

Ser. No. 10/706,718
Amdt. dated Sept. 21, 2004

a second sleeve pivotally connected to said first sleeve and adapted to receive a second longitudinally-extending handle, rake, wherein said second sleeve comprises a semi-circular channel for receiving a projection extending radially relative to the second handle, guide pin for allowing rotation of said second rake handle within said second sleeve.

22. (Canceled)

23. (New) A method of combining two rakes or the like, said method comprising the steps of:

engaging a first cylindrical sleeve with a first handle;
engaging a second cylindrical sleeve with a second handle; wherein,
the first cylindrical sleeve is pivotally connected to the second cylindrical sleeve, and
at least one of the first sleeve and the second sleeve has an at least semi-circular channel
in the cylindrical wall for receiving a projection to facilitate rotation of the first handle relative to
the second handle.

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